

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

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1. (Twice Amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) forming a silicon oxynitride film on a silicon substrate;
- (b) performing a heat treatment while keeping a surface of the silicon oxynitride film in contact with a gas containing nitrogen and oxygen to introduce at least nitrogen into the silicon oxynitride film;
- D / (c) after step (b), forming a semiconductor film containing an impurity of first conductivity type on the silicon oxynitride film;
- (d) after step (c), forming a gate electrode composed of the semiconductor film by patterning the semiconductor film;
- (e) after step (d), forming a gate insulating film composed of the silicon oxynitride film by patterning the silicon oxynitride film,

wherein the gate insulating film has a nitrogen concentration peak formed at around the center portion of the silicon oxynitride film.

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